

CLAIMS

1. Process for preparing 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzylalcohol which comprises reacting a 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenylmagnesium halide with solid paraformaldehyde in a solvent.
- 5 2. Process according to claim 1, characterised in that said solvent is an aliphatic ether.
3. Process according to claim 2, characterised in that said aliphatic ether is tetrahydrofuran (THF).
4. Process according to claim 1, characterised in that said solvent is a mixture of
10 aliphatic ethers and aromatic hydrocarbons .
5. Process according to claim 4, characterised in that the aliphatic ether is selected from diethyl ether, THF, methyl-THF, isobutyl-ether, dimethoxyethane (DME), diethoxyethane, diglyme, butyl-diglyme, ethyl-diglyme and triglyme.
- 15 6. Process according to claim 4, characterised in that the aromatic hydrocarbon is selected from toluene, o,m,p-xylenes, o,m,p-esfluoroxylens and 1,3-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzene.
7. Process according to claim 4, characterised in that the reaction solvent is a mixture of THF and an aromatic hydrocarbon.
- 20 8. Process according to claim 7, characterised in that the reaction solvent is a mixture of THF and an aromatic hydrocarbon selected from toluene and 1,3-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzene.

9. Process according to claim 7 or 8, characterised in that said mixture comprises from 20 to 60% p/p of THF.
10. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenylmagnesium halide is selected from 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenylmagnesium bromide and 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenylmagnesium chloride.
11. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that the solid paraformaldehyde is used in an approximately equimolar amount or slightly in excess with respect to the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenylmagnesium halide.
12. Process according to claim 11 characterised in that the molar excess of paraformaldehyde is less than or equal to 5% with respect to the halide or 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)phenyl-magnesium.
13. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that the reaction temperature is between 30 and 90°C.
14. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that at the end of the reaction the adduct is hydrolysed with an aqueous solution of a mineral acid.
15. Process according to claim 14, characterised in that said mineral acid is selected from hydrochloric acid and sulphuric acid.

16. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzylalcohol is isolated by distillation or crystallisation.
17. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzylalcohol obtained is used as a reagent to obtain a 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzyl halide.
18. Process according to any one of the previous claims, characterised in that said 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl-magnesium halide is obtained starting from the corresponding 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-1-halobenzene by treatment with magnesium in a solvent selected from the solvents quoted in claims 2 to 9.
19. Process according to claims 17 and 18, characterised in that :
- (a) a 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-phenyl magnesium halide is formed from a 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)-halobenzene in a solvent selected from the aliphatic ethers and a mixture of aliphatic ethers and aromatic hydrocarbons;
 - (b) solid paraformaldehyde is added to the reaction mixture thus obtained;
 - (c) the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzylalcohol thus obtained is submitted to a halogenation reaction with HX where X is a halide, optionally in the presence of sulphuric acid;
 - (d) the 3,5-bis(trifluoromethyl)benzyl halide thus obtained is isolated.